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VA claim exam (C&P exam)

After you file your disability benefits claim, we may ask you to have a claim exam (also known as a compensation and pension, or C&P, exam). Get answers to commonly asked questions about the VA claim exam.

Why might I need a VA claim exam?

This exam will help us determine if you have a service-connected disability. It will also help us rate your disability if you have one.

We base your rating on how severe your disability is—and your rating will affect how much disability compensation you'll receive. Compensation may include things like monthly payments and enrollment in the VA health care program.

Does everyone who files a claim need to have a VA claim exam?

No. We'll ask you to have a claim exam only if we need more information to decide your claim.

If you have enough medical evidence in your file to support your claim, we'll follow the Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) process. This means we'll review your medical records and ask you to submit more evidence if needed, instead of asking you to have an exam.

Medical evidence may include doctor and hospital reports, test results, and other documents.

Will I need more than one VA claim exam?

You may need more than one exam in these situations:

- If you submit a claim for more than one condition, you may need more than one exam. We'll try to schedule all your exams on the same day.
 - For some conditions, you may need follow-up exams (called "review exams"). In a review exam, the provider will determine whether the severity of your condition has changed since your last exam.
 - If you request a decision review of your claim decision, we may ask you to have another exam.
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How we schedule your VA claim exam

How will you contact me to schedule my claim exam?

The staff at your local VA medical center or a VA contractor will mail you a letter with the date and time of your exam. You may also get a phone call or email from us or the contractor. We may ask you to provide certain personal information and identification (ID). This process helps us make sure that the person we're communicating with is really you—and not someone pretending to be you.

Make sure we have your up-to-date address, phone number, and email address.

[Update your contact information online \(https://www.va.gov/change-address\)](https://www.va.gov/change-address).

Note: You can't start the scheduling process for claim exams yourself. We'll start the scheduling process by contacting you.

What should I do when I get my claim exam letter or phone call?

You'll need to confirm your appointment. Call the number on the exam letter to confirm the place and time. If you get a phone call, you can confirm the place and time on the call.

When you confirm your appointment, you can request help with transportation or other accommodations you need.

You can also request a male or female provider in these situations:

- If you're having a reproductive health, breast, rectal, or mental health exam, **or**
- If your claim is related to a mental or physical health condition resulting from military sexual trauma (MST)

What if I need to change the day or time of my scheduled claim exam?

If you need to reschedule your exam, tell the VA medical center or contractor at least 48 hours in advance. Rescheduling your exam may delay your claim.

To reschedule, call the number on your appointment letter:

- For Loyal Source Government Services (LSGS), call [833-832-7077](tel:833-832-7077) (TTY: 711). Caller ID will show "VA Exam - Loyal Source."
- For OptumServe Health Services (OSHS), call [866-933-8387](tel:866-933-8387). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM - Optum."
- For Leidos QTC Health Services (QTC), call [800-682-9701](tel:800-682-9701). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM-QTC."

- For Veterans Evaluation Services (VES), call [877-637-8387](tel:877-637-8387). If you're outside the continental U.S., call +1-[713-255-5656](tel:713-255-5656). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM-VES."

Or call us at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000). We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

We may ask you to provide certain personal information and identification (ID). This process helps us make sure that the person we're communicating with is really you—and not someone pretending to be you.

Note: If your exam is with a contractor, you can only reschedule once per exam. The new appointment must be within 5 days of the original appointment. If you're not available during those 5 days, tell the contractor. Then call us at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000) and we'll start the process again when you're available.

Where will I need to go for my claim exam?

In some cases, we may schedule a telehealth exam. This is a phone or video appointment you can join from your home.

For in-person exams, you'll need to travel to your local VA medical center or to a contractor location.

Contractors will schedule exams as close to your home as possible. They'll try to find a location within 50 miles of your home. If you need a specialist provider, they'll try to find a location within 100 miles of your home.

You'll need a specialist provider for these types of exams:

- Dental exams
- Eye exams
- Hearing exams
- Mental health exams

Note: If you live in an area with limited providers, your exam may be farther away. We'll ask for your permission before scheduling an exam that's more than 50 miles from your home (or 100 miles for a specialist provider).

Will VA pay for my travel to and from a claim exam?

Yes. We'll pay you back for travel to and from your claim exam at a VA medical center.

[Learn about VA travel pay](https://www.va.gov/health-care/file-travel-pay-reimbursement) (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/file-travel-pay-reimbursement>).

If your exam is with a contractor, the contractor will pay you back for travel to and from the exam. If you don't get a travel payment from the contractor within 14 days after your appointment, call the contractor.

- For Loyal Source Government Services (LSGS), call [833-832-7077](tel:833-832-7077) (TTY: 711). Caller ID will show "VA Exam - Loyal Source."
- For OptumServe Health Services (OSHS), call [866-933-8387](tel:866-933-8387). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM-Optum."
- For Leidos QTC Health Services (QTC), call [800-682-9701](tel:800-682-9701). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM-QTC."
- For Veterans Evaluation Services (VES), call [877-637-8387](tel:877-637-8387). If you're outside the continental U.S., call +1-[713-255-5656](tel:713-255-5656). Caller ID will show "VA EXAM-VES."

We may ask you to provide certain personal information and identification (ID). This process helps us make sure that the person we're communicating with is really you—and not someone pretending to be you.

Note: If you're an active-duty service member or you live outside the U.S. or the U.S. territories, you aren't eligible for travel reimbursement.

What if I miss my claim exam?

Missing your exam will delay your claim. We may also decide your claim based on the existing evidence, which could affect your benefits.

If you missed your exam for what we consider a good reason (called “good cause”), we’ll schedule a new appointment for you. These are some examples of good cause:

- If someone in your immediate family dies
- If you’re homeless
- If you’re hospitalized
- If you have a terminal illness

How to explain why you missed your exam

You can explain the reason you missed your exam in any of these ways:

- Call us at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000) (TTY: 711)
- [Upload a letter online using our claim status tool](https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status)
(<https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status>).
- Mail a letter to this address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Evidence Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

What to expect at your VA claim exam

What should I bring to my claim exam?

You don't need to bring anything to your exam. If you have any new non-VA medical records (like records from a recent surgery or illness), be sure to submit them before your appointment.

You can submit new non-VA medical records in any of these ways:

- [Upload medical records online using our claim status tool](https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status) (<https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status>).
- Submit medical records through your accredited representative or VSO
[Find an accredited representative or VSO](https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative) (<https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative>).
- Mail medical records to your nearest VA regional office
[Find a VA regional office near you](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits) (<https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits>).

If you bring new records to your exam, your provider may review them. But your provider can't submit your records for you.

What else do I need to do to prepare for my claim exam?

Plan to arrive at your appointment 15 minutes early. If you're late, your provider may cancel your exam.

Wear comfortable clothes so you can move freely during the exam.

For more information about how to prepare, you can play our VA claim exam video series.

[Play our VA claim exam videos on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrrh23QvVYhAJ6t3vr81YvDypkezZ2yl)
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrrh23QvVYhAJ6t3vr81YvDypkezZ2yl>).

What happens at a claim exam?

A claim exam isn't like a normal medical exam. The provider won't treat you for any illness or injury, give you referrals to other providers, or prescribe medicine. That's because the purpose of the exam is to gather information that will help us make a decision on your claim.

During your exam, the provider may do any or all of these things:

- Perform a basic physical exam. This may or may not include physical contact.
- Ask you questions based on the medical records in your claim file. These may include questions from the Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) for each service-connected condition you're claiming.

[Review the DBQs](#)

[. \(https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_publicdbqs.asp\)](https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_publicdbqs.asp)

- Ask you to get other tests (like X-rays or blood work), at no cost to you.

If you have questions about what's happening during your exam, you can ask the provider. But they can't answer questions about the claims process, tell you the exam results, or make decisions about your claim.

Who will examine me?

Either a VA provider or a VA contract provider will do the exam.

We use contractors so that we can process your claim more quickly. Our contractors follow the same medical training and licensing standards as our VA providers. And they follow our privacy policies to protect your information.

You can request a male or female provider in these situations:

- If you're having a reproductive health, breast, rectal, or mental health exam, **or**

- If your claim is related to a mental or physical health condition resulting from MST

You can also have your own provider examine you and fill out a form called a DBQ. Then your provider can submit this form to us.

[Get instructions for your provider to fill out a DBQ](https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_disabilityexams.asp)
(https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_disabilityexams.asp).

Note: We won't pay or reimburse any costs related to your own provider completing a DBQ.

Can I bring a family member or caregiver to my claim exam?

If you have children, you may want to plan for childcare during your exam. This is because you and the provider may need to discuss sensitive topics related to your claim.

If you'd like a caregiver or family member to stay with you during the exam, you can discuss this with the provider. The provider may ask caregivers and family members to stay outside of the exam room.

For sensitive physical exams, you can ask for a medical assistant or chaperone who works with the provider to stay in the room with you.

How long will the claim exam take?

Your exam may take only 15 minutes, or it may last an hour or more. This depends on the conditions you've claimed and how much more information we need.

It's important to remember that your exam is only one part of the claim review process. The provider will also spend time outside the exam carefully reviewing your records.

After your VA claim exam

What happens after my claim exam?

The provider will write up an exam report and send it to us.

We'll review all the evidence in your file, including the exam report from the provider. Then we'll make a decision on your claim and send you a decision letter.

The processing time for your claim depends on how complex your claim is and how many conditions you've claimed.

[Check our most recent estimate for the average number of days to complete a claim \(https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim\)](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim)

[Check your claim status online \(https://www.va.gov/track-claims/\)](https://www.va.gov/track-claims/)

How can I get my claim exam results?

You'll need to request a copy of the final exam report. You can't get the results at your exam or directly from the provider.

To request a copy of the exam report, you'll need to fill out a Freedom of Information Act or Privacy Act Request (VA Form 20-10206).

You can submit the form in any of these 3 ways:

Option 1: Online

[Request personal records online \(VA Form 20-10206\) \(https://www.va.gov/records/request-personal-records-form-20-10206/\)](https://www.va.gov/records/request-personal-records-form-20-10206/)

Option 2: By mail

First, download the PDF version.

[Get VA Form 20-10206 to download \(https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-10206\)](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-10206)

Then mail the completed form to this address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Evidence Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

Option 3: In person

First, download the PDF version.

[Get VA Form 20-10206 to download \(https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-10206\)](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-10206)

Then bring the completed form to your nearest VA regional office.

[Find a VA regional office near you \(https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits\)](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits)

What information will VA use to make a decision on my claim?

We'll review:

- Medical records you've given us
- Exam report from the provider who did your claim exam
- Results of any medical tests the provider ordered
- Statements from you and others about your claim
- Your military medical and personnel records

What if I had a bad experience at my claim exam?

If you had a bad experience with the provider at your claim exam, we encourage you to report your concerns right away.

You can report your concerns in any of these ways:

- Give feedback on the contractor's customer satisfaction survey
- Write a letter and submit it as part of your claim file
- Call the contractor who scheduled your exam
- Call us at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000) (TTY: 711)

Or you can contact your local VA regional office.

[Find a VA regional office near you \(https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits\)](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits).

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[How VA assigns disability ratings](#)

Learn how we assign severity ratings and how they affect your disability payments.

[Check claim and appeal status](#)

Track the status of your disability claims and appeals.

[Choosing a decision review option](#)

Find out what to do if you disagree with your disability rating decision.

VA benefits

Disability

File a claim for disability compensation for conditions related to your military service, and manage your benefits over time.

Need more help?

VA benefits hotline: [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000)

VA.gov technical support: [866-279-3677](tel:866-279-3677)

MyVA411 main information line: [800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411)

Telecommunications Relay Services (using TTY) [TTY: 711](tel:711)

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